



COLUMBIA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

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Ad Hoc Broadband Committee Minutes October 13, 2022

Members present: Char Holtan, Steve Balsiger, Tess Carr

Members absent without notice: Troy Ryan, Mike Weyh

Also in attendance during all or portions of the meeting: Brad Cook, Chris Polzer, Sue Moll, Joe Ruf, Charles Sailer

Others in attendance: Jim Schmitt; Jonathan Richie (Portage Daily Register); Jaron McCallum (Public Service Commission); Larry Bierke (Iowa County); Jerry Schneider, Darren Moser, Tim Spath (Marquette Adams Cooperative)

The meeting of the Ad Hoc Broadband Committee was called to order by Chair Holtan at 12:37 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed as required by the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. The meeting was held at the Administration Building, Meeting Room 113-114, 112 E. Edgewater Street, Portage, WI.

Public Input

Jim Schmitt, Pardeeville resident, shared concerns with internet service in his neighborhood, located south of Haynes Road and north of Park Lake in Pardeeville. The area currently has access to Frontier and was informed residents could not be part of the Charter buildout north of Haynes Road.

Approve Agenda

Motion by Carr to approve the agenda as published. Second by Balsiger. Motion carried.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by Carr to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2022 Ad Hoc Broadband Committee meeting. Second by Balsiger. Motion carried.

Carr was named acting secretary in Weyh's absence.

Guest Speakers

Jaron McCallum, Wisconsin Broadband Office, gave an overview of the office and the vision to have access to affordable, reliable high-speed broadband service and digital equity throughout the state. The office provides state and local outreach on state and federal grant funding, rules and eligibility for broadband expansion. The State Broadband Expansion Grant has been available since 2014 and is competitive. Grants are awarded based on a scoresheet. Matching funds are not required but are a priority factor when scoring. All funds have been awarded for 2022. An additional 4 million may be available in 2023. Eligibility maps are being revised to give a better overview of unserved/underserved areas. Federal grants include ARPA and CARES. The FCC disbursed funds through a reverse auction, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). Charter/Spectrum and Marquette Adams won in the Columbia County area. A federal program called Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) has been announced. The grant timeline has not been determined yet. Planning

is just in the beginning stages. McCallum invited members to attend a kick-off event for "Internet for All: Connecting Wisconsin" will be held on Tuesday, October 25 in Wausau. He also encouraged members to visit the Public Service Commission website for more detailed information.

Larry Bierke, Iowa County Administrator, shared Iowa County's goal of providing fiber optic throughout the county. The County has worked with BugTussel and Mount Horeb Telephone Company (MHTC) through loans, bonding and ARPA funding to provide fiber optic for portions of the county. The county highway shops and 911 towers will also have fiber optic access. The County worked with the Southwest Regional Planning Commission to use GIS mapping to develop a map to identify areas that are unserved or underserved by broadband.

Jerry Schneider, General Manager and CEO for Marquette Adams Cooperative, Inc. spoke about the Coop and their efforts to provide broadband service in Columbia County. The Coop has an agreement with the hospital in Portage and has worked with the ethanol plant in Friesland. ARPA funds will be used in the Town of Lewiston, with the town providing a portion of their ARPA funds. RDOF funds have also been used in Columbia County. The Coop is willing to work with Columbia County on the northern portion of the county. The entire county may be too large, although the Coop Board would need to determine growth. Darren Moser, incoming General Manager, and Tim Spath, Plant Manager were also present and provided input.

Survey Responses Summarized for Review

Moll stated the survey was emailed on September 22nd to all municipal clerks in Columbia County, as well as municipal chairs/presidents/mayors with an email on file. Of the 35 municipalities, 13 municipalities responded by the October 6th deadline. Survey responses were reviewed.

Assign Duties

No action taken.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Ac Hoc Broadband Committee will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 12:30 p.m. Municipal representatives will be invited to attend the meeting and a representative from Charter Spectrum will be asked to speak to the committee. If available, a map of the unserved/underserved will be reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tess Carr
Acting Ad Hoc Broadband Committee Secretary